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handle 100 is in the closed position relative to the pawl 140 and carriage 130, the pivot attachment pin 170 is positioned within the clearance cut of the pawl 140. The carriage assembly is removably positioned within the central cavity 30 of the housing 20 such that the front wall 131 of the carriage 130 is most forward relative to the front end of the housing 20. The carriage assembly is snapped into place within the housing 20 by the snap legs 220 of the side walls 22 of the housing 20 catching the cutout 230 of the underside of the carriage 130. The carriage assembly is thus held in place in the housing 20. The cover 90 may be attached to the handle 100 to enclose the central cavity 30 of the housing 20 and conceal the latch mechanism. When the cover 90 encloses the central cavity 30, the cover 90 is generally flush with the top wall 24 of the housing 20. --

IN THE CLAIMS:

✓ Cancel claim 1, 2 and 4 without prejudice.

Add new claim 8 as follows:

- -8. A linear compression latch comprising:

a housing;

a lever handle rotatable by an operator between a first position and a second position, the lever handle being mounted in the housing;

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a pawl mounted for substantially linear motion, the pawl being actuated by rotation of the lever handle and traveling substantially linearly between an open position to a closed position as the lever handle is rotated between the first position to second position;

wherein the pawl is mounted to travel between the open position along a first path and an intermediate position; and

wherein the pawl is mounted to travel in a second path in a direction substantially perpendicular to the first path between the intermediate position and the closed position. --

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Please amend claim 3 as follows:

A6 -- 3. A linear compression latch according to claim 8 wherein the first path is linear. --

Please amend claim 5 as follows:

A7 -- 5. A linear compression latch according to claim 8 wherein the second path is linear. --